

Singapore

Plucky victim hauled molester off MRT train

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8 months' jail for construction worker who was handed over to police with others' help

MOLESTED on board a crowded MRT train, a woman was so set on getting the offender that she yanked him out of the train at its next stop. There, with the help of another woman and the station manager, the man was put in a holding room and the police called.

Yesterday, Rengasamy Velmurugan, a 20-year-old Indian national, found himself in a district court, where he said it was 'silly' of him to have given in to his urge to touch and squeeze the woman's breast.

The construction worker, unrepresented, pleaded guilty and was jailed for eight months.

The court heard that the 23-year-old victim, then a health assistant on her way to meet a friend, boarded the packed train at Lavender on Jan 16. As she stood facing the glass-panelled sliding doors, she noticed Rengasamy standing to her right, his arms folded.

As the train began moving, she felt something rest on her right breast, then felt it being squeezed twice, Deputy Public Prosecutor Cassandra Cheong said.

The woman shot a look at Rengasamy, and saw him withdraw his right hand from her chest, fold his arms and look away hastily. She confronted him but he denied doing anything. She then shouted for help but no one on board came forward.

In a fit of anger, she slapped him across his face and grabbed hold of his right arm, intending to haul him out at the next station to make a police report. He immediately shook off her grip. She then grabbed him by the collar and alighted at Bugis.

DPP Cheong said the victim shouted for help as she pulled him out of the train. An unknown woman came forward and, as the victim told her what he had done, he broke free and ran towards the train to reboard it.

However, the victim hauled him out again and dragged him towards the escalator with the help of other passengers. The station manager heard the commotion and the police were called.

Pleading for leniency before District Judge Eugene Teo yesterday, Rengasamy said he has been working here since February 2007 and is supporting his parents and two younger siblings.

Speaking to The Straits Times afterwards, the victim said she told Rengasamy after he molested her that she had to 'teach him some lesson' so that he would not take advantage of other people in future.

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